

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08 TRSE-00 /097 W

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R 040600Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0612

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 1231

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, SF

SUBJECT: KRUGER MAY RELEASE SOME SECURITY DETAINEES

REF: (A) JOHANNESBURG 402, (B) PRETORIA 1184

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED:

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING A VISIT TO THE PLACES SECURITY DETAINEES ARE HELD, THE SAG MINISTER OF JUSTICE INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO RELEASE SOME DETAINEES. TIMING OF RELEASE MAY COINCIDE WITH UPCOMING ELECTIONS IN SOWETO. END SUMMARY

1. ACCORDING TO MARCH 3 PRESS REPORTS, SAG MINISTER OF JUSTICE JIMMY KRUGER VISITED SOME SECURITY DETAINEES HELD AT MODDERBEE PRISON AND "THE FORT" IN JOHANNESBURG OVER THE FEBRUARY 25 WEEKEND. KRUGER ALLEGDLY SAID THAT THE
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PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT WAS TO INSPCT PRISON FACILITIES OF THE 62 INTRNAL SECURITY ACT DETAINEES. DURING HIS INSPECTION TOUR, KRUGER SPOKE WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SOWETO COMMITTEE OF TEN, DR. NTHATO MOTLANA AND WITH TH EDITOR OF THE BANNED NEWSPAPERS "WORLD" AND "WEEKEND WORLD" PERCY QUOBOZA. KRUGER EXPRESSED SATIS-FACTION WITH THE SLEEPING, EATING AND RECREATIONAL

FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN THE TWO INSTITUTIONS.

2. KRUGER ANNOUNCED THAT H IS CONSIDERING RELEASING SOME DETAINEES ALTHOUGH HE DECLINED TO SAY EITHER WHO OR WHEN. PRESS REPORTS LINK KRUGER'S WILLINGNESS TO RELEASE SOME DETAINEES WITH THE PREVIOUS PUBLICLY STATD INTEREST IN RLEASING COMMITTEE OF TEN MEMBERS ON THE PART OF MINISTER OF PLURAL RELATIONS CONNIE MULDER AS REPORTED IN REFTEL (A).M

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3. JOHANNESBURG CIVIL RIGHTS ATTORNEY DENNIS KUNY TOLD EMBOFF ON MARCH 3 THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT SOWETO COMMITTEE OF TEN MEMBER ELLEN KUZWAYO MAY BE RELEASED ON MARCH 4 ALONG WITH SEVERAL OTHER DETAINEES. "OGGENBLAD" EDITOR PAKENDORF INFORMED EMBOFF MARCH 3 THAT NO DATE FOR SOME DETAINEES' RELEASE HAD BEEN SET YET BUT RELEAST SHOULD TAKE PLACE BEFOR THE THIRD WEEK IN APRIL, THE LAST POSSIBLE DATE FOR THE SOWETO COMMUNITY COUNCIL BY-ELECTIONS.

4. COMMENT: SMARTING FROM BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CRITICISM OVER HIS HANDLING OF THE BIKO AFFAIR, KRUGER HAS A LONG WAY TO GO IN RESPONDING TO BLACK RE-SENTMENT AND HIS WHITE CRITICS OVER THE NUMBER AND STATUS
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OF SECURITY DETAINEES. KRUGER'S RECENT PLAN FOR GREATER ACCESS TO DETAINEES (REF B), HIS VISIT TO TWO PRISONS, AND STATED WILLINGNSS TO RELEASE SOME DETAINEES INDICATE HIS CONCERN OVER HIS POOR IMAGE, IF NOTHING ELSE. IN ADDITION, CONNIE MULDER, ANXIOUS TO GET THE SOWETO COMMUNITY COUNCIL STRUCTURE OFF THE GROUND, IS PROBABLY APPLYING CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON KRUGER TO ALLAY AN IMPORTANT GRIEVANCE IN SOWETO.
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